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IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

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IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

BY
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH



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GETTING LOST IN THE
CROWD

GETTING LOST IN THE CROWD

THE place was Herald Square in New York city. The time was one night after a Presidential election. Manhattan was pulsating with political excitement. One vast, seething mass of people congested Herald Square. There were thousands on thousands of them, some shouting, some blowing horns, some watching the election returns which were displayed in front of the New York Herald Building. The young man had found a place to sit slightly above the crowd and where it flowed past him on every side. From his vantage ground he looked out on the restless sea of people. He was thrilling to the finger tips with the vivid human sense of it all. A smile of

amusement flitted suddenly over his face as he thought of his friends and wondered where they were.] Nine of them, students in a New Jersey institution of learning, had come to New York to spend the evening together. In the jostling, pushing crowd near City Hall four of them had been separated from the others. The remaining five had merrily walked through the Bowery past Tammany Hall on Fourteenth Street, and when they came to Twenty-third Street encountered another mob of fiercely pushing people. Emerging from this human maelstrom, two of them were left together. They continued to walk through the streets up Fifth Avenue to the Waldorf, then over to Herald Square. In the first encounter with the converging human rivers there the two were separated, and so the young man found himself alone.

A man with a quiet face and observant eyes was sitting beside him. He looked at the fresh and eager young face near him and then remarked, "It's about all a man can do to keep from getting lost in a crowd like this."

The young man laughed.

"There were nine of us three hours ago," he said. "All the time we've been getting separated from each other. I lost the eighth man just a few minutes ago." He was silent a moment and then added whimsically, "But I haven't lost myself."

The keen eyes of the man beside him were suddenly bent searchingly on his face.

"You'll be a happy fellow if you can always say that," he observed with a certain note of seriousness in his voice. "Most of the people I know have gotten lost in the crowd."

In a few minutes the two had separated, each going his own way, and at the railroad station the young man found his eight friends, hilariously jolly, glad of the result of the election, and full of the bubbling, joyous energy of youth. The train rolled out of the station, and as it moved along the young man repeated to himself the words he had heard in Herald Square, "Most of the people I know have gotten lost in the crowd." The whirring wheels below him seemed to take up the words and to murmur a low, insistent echo, "Lost in the crowd; lost in the crowd."

An hour or two later, after cheery and comradely "good-nights" had been said, the young man found himself alone in his room in the big brick dormitory. Then the lights were turned off and he was safely in bed, very weary, but very wide-

awake. He seemed as he lay there to be still on the train, and the wheels were still muttering, "Lost in the crowd." Why had the phrase so seized upon his imagination? Why did it keep pounding away at the door of his mind like a guest arrived in the night, who must rouse the sleepers before he will be admitted? Was there some personal message in the words which he ought to hear and heed?

That curious awareness about life and its values which sometimes characterizes a wakeful hour at night came to him, and his weariness seemed to pass from him as thoughts kept coming into his mind. From some cranny in his memory a line from Wordsworth came marching forth. "The world is too much with us," he found himself repeating as he lay upon his bed. A sentence

from a distinguished preacher whom he had recently heard quickly followed: "Men were meant to be makers of the world; the world is all too often the unmaker of men."

An utterance from a clever essayist emerged into the clear light of consciousness: "So often you cannot see the idea for the people." Then the wheels seemed to be moving under him again with their reiterated murmur, "Lost in the crowd."

Suddenly there came clearly before him the picture of the old farm where he had been brought up. How well he knew every acre of it! There he had guided the plow, there he had gone through all the toil of the farmer's year, and there he had planned to find a larger, richer life in the world outside. He had worked his way through college, leaving his younger brothers to bear the burden

of the life of the farm with his father, and now he was doing graduate work. He expected to receive his doctor's degree the coming spring, and the road of life lay before him; it seemed a long road, and a very alluring highway.

[During the last few years he had mingled with many types of men. He had been constantly receptive. He had tried to get something from every man he met. He had opened his life completely to the currents of the life about him. Had he become a mere reflection of his environment? Had he surrendered more than he had gained? Had he been dazzled by the play of light and the rich glow of color, and was all this wonderful new life, beside which the old farm seemed so provincial, deceiving him? Had he brought from the farm something more valuable than the

things he had found in the busy highways of men? Was he in danger of losing it? Was he in danger of being lost in the crowd?

He realized that he had been casting off ideas and opinions and practices of that simple and direct and earnest old life out of which he had come. He sometimes thought of its directness as impracticable in the world of to-day, of its simple piety as quite impossible in the complex, disillusioned society where he was to make a place for himself.

A picture came before him of his father conducting family worship. How quiet and deep and real it had all been! His father often made grammatical blunders, "But it was the King's English, sure enough," he found himself saying; "at least it was English which reached the King."

He called himself up suddenly.

Did he believe in the King? Did he believe that Some One heard prayers like those of his father, all full of great human outreach after the help of God? To be sure, he had never actually denied these things, but he knew now that they had been slipping from him. His world had a great many people, but, to be quite straightforward and honest, it didn't have any God.

In college he had taken a Young Men's Christian Association course on the life of Christ. It all came back to him now—the portrait of the One who had walked through the world with so many currents playing upon him, but always sternly true to that relation to his Father which was the basis of all his life. The multitudes kept pressing upon him, but they never mastered him. He was never lost in the crowd.

The young man stared wide-eyed into the darkness. "I've been only a sponge," he cried, "and I've absorbed the wrong things."

Like a moving picture, the life of the last years passed before him. How gay and bright, but how soulless it all was! And the bitterest thing about it was its futility. The finest part of the gayety, the best part of the brilliancy, could have been kept without the surrender which he had made.

But just where was the point of failure? Just how could it have been avoided? He saw it all clearly enough now. He had lost the sense of God and of life's greatest realities because he had stopped taking God seriously. He had been more interested in his relations to a multitude of careless people than in the one great relation of life. You have

to keep obeying God in order to keep sure that there is a God. He had made the crowd the ruler of his life. He had sought to please the crowd. That had been his most eager desire. He had lost God in the crowd. And he had lost himself in the crowd.

His mind seemed curiously still at this point, and then in the stillness he seemed to hear his father's voice in prayer. Tears started to his eyes. His father was praying for him—the boy away at the big university. He could fairly hear the words in which he was asking God that this son of his might bring honor to Christ and be a helper of the world.

The young man sprang from his bed. He knelt beside it. His face was tense with struggle and decision.

“O God,” he cried, “help me to

put Christ, and not the crowd, in command of my life."

He remained kneeling for a long time, while a strange and wonderful peace crept into his soul. Then the knowledge of a great physical weariness came to him. He lay down upon the bed again, and soon was sleeping as quietly as a little child.

THE MAN WHO FINDS
HIMSELF

THE MAN WHO FINDS HIMSELF

THE cub reporter sat beside his friend in the grandstand of the Polo Grounds, New York. It was a Saturday afternoon off and the two young men had come uptown to see a game of ball between the Giants and the Pirates. A wonderful day it was, and a multitude of New York fans gazed down at the players. Rube Marquard was pitching for the Giants and he was playing a phenomenal game.

"He doesn't look much like a Big League failure to-day," remarked the cub reporter to his friend.

"You're right about that," replied the other. "McGraw knew what he was about when he paid all those shekels for the Rube. But it was a

close shave. Why, I've seen him put in the pitcher's mound when any scrub player could have knocked his balls anywhere he wanted to."

"What was the matter with him?" asked the cub reporter.

"Stage fright, I guess," was the reply. "The Big League audiences got on his nerves. It took all the stuff out of his arm to see the crowd. He wasn't used to so much company and he lost his head. But he's bravely over it now, except on a bad day once in a while. And even Matty, who's as cool as ten cucumbers, has his bad days. I saw McGraw take him out of the game in the third inning one day last week."

By this time the game was becoming all-engrossing and conversation lagged. The great throng in which you might have seen bankers, lawyers, ministers, college presidents,

and men and women from every walk in life had settled down to enjoy a hard-fought battle between men who were putting every ounce of energy and every quality of brain into the game. With perfect poise and absolute self-control Marquard was putting balls over the plate which moved like lightning and were a perpetual bewilderment to the Pirates, who stood waiting to be mowed down like ripe grain.

"That's going some," said the cub reporter as the crowd burst out in spontaneous shouting, the kind of heart-warming tribute New York gives to the man who plays ball with cool self-control and brilliant mastery of all his resources.

The tension eased for a time. One inning succeeded another. It seemed that all the fighting quality the Pirates brought would be unable to

make an impression on the Giants to-day. Marquard was the Gibraltar which was completely invulnerable. He held the safety of the Giants in his hands.

Then in the seventh inning, with the score two to one in favor of the Giants, something happened. Was the arm of the brilliant pitcher weakening? It began when a Pirate made first in safety. Then one man was put out. But a moment later a Pirate struck a ball with a cut of his bat which sent it straight and sure and brought him to first and his friend to second. The next man to the bat was put out. But the one following found the ball, put it where it wasn't expected, and in a moment there was a Pirate on first, a Pirate on second, and a Pirate on third, with two outs. The crowd breathed hard as a famous Pittsburgh slugger came

to the bat. Marquard threw a ball. One strike. He threw another—a ball. He threw again, a second ball. The next was a strike. The crowd breathed more easily. But the next was a ball. Two outs, three men on bases, and the batter with three balls and two strikes!

“I wonder if we shouted too soon,” murmured the cub reporter.

Thousands of faces were drawn with excitement. Gray-haired men leaned forward as if their future depended on the behavior of the pitcher now. It was one of those thrilling moments which only the genuine fan can understand.

And what about Marquard—the man who again and again had been called the Big League failure, the man whose arm had weakened season after season at the sight of the big crowd? Did the old stage fright

come back to him now? Surely, in this testing moment, if ever, he would weaken. The crowd leaned forward breathless.

In the pitcher's mound Rube Marquard stood quietly. He seemed an incarnation of calmness. He never looked at the crowd. He seemed unconscious of its tense expectancy. There was a sudden movement of his arm. His whole body seemed poised. All his energy was gathered and put into one terrible throw which sent the ball, true as a rifle shot from a sharpshooter, over the plate at the right height, at just the unexpected instant.

Three strikes and out and the Pirates took the field.

A man whom the cub reporter recognized as a Wall Street magnate was sitting in a box just below him. He turned to a friend and said, "A

test like that proves it. Marquard has found himself at last."

From that moment the game was virtually decided. The Pirates did not successfully rally and the game ended a victory for New York. It was a hard-fought game every moment, and Marquard had won it by perfect self-control as well as by his pitching arm.

That night the cub reporter found himself seated in a church on the West Side. A distinguished preacher from the Middle West was addressing a large gathering of young people. Only a paragraph in the next day's Luminary would be given to the occasion unless the preacher said something unusual or startling which could be featured. Alert for possible headlines, the cub reporter sat waiting for the speaker to begin.

There was a buzz of subdued con-

versation all over the house. Groups of young people from many churches had come to hear the distinguished preacher, and they had much to say to each other before the meeting opened. The presiding officer rose. There was a hymn, sung with amazing zest by hundreds of eager young voices. Then there was a prayer, a special piece of music, and the speaker of the evening rose.

He was a rather tall man with an athletic figure, keen, flashing eyes, and a vibrant voice. His theme was "Having a Life of Your Own."

The cub reporter remembered that this preacher had made a remarkable record as an athlete in a certain great university. He was trying to remember his batting record, when—he forgot about everything except the voice which was speaking and the thing which was being said. The speaker

who can completely master a reporter—even a cub reporter—has unusual power. This man cut away from the conventional. He used raw, biting, penetrating words. He passed by the unessential and brought you face to face with the heart of his theme. There was a wealth of illustration, from literature, from life, from sport—all focused like the rays of light through a burning glass on the one blazing point which he wanted to make unforgettable to his hearers. Now he was pouring satire like hot lava upon the lives which have no individual integrity—no deep loyalty to their own meaning. Now he was portraying with glowing, burning words the man who lives in noble faithfulness to the deepest meaning of his own life. "It's a great thing," he cried, "to discover yourself! It is a greater

thing to be true to yourself. That is your best gift to the world."

Then, with a sudden turn, he brought his hearers into the presence of the Man of Galilee. You saw his unflinching loyalty to the real meaning of his own life—his dauntless integrity of personality. Another quick movement of thought and you saw him as the great revealer, the one who interprets men to themselves, who reveals to them the meaning of their lives, and gives them the power of loyalty to their own personality. One last change of position and he was picturing the young people before him, each one loyal to his own manhood, as Christ interpreted it to him, each one offering to God and to the world the priceless gift of this deep kind of personal integrity. "Never be contented until you find yourselves," he said, "and then never

be contented unless you are being true to yourselves."

The address was over. There was another outburst of zestful singing. Then the gathering dispersed. The cub reporter found himself walking alone on Riverside Drive. He looked down at the mysterious night beauty of the Hudson. He watched the glow of lights on the ferryboats, and the flash of the great electric displays to be seen on the Jersey shore, with the far-off shining of the stars above.

He was still in the glow which the speaker at the West Side church had created. He was no longer the cub reporter, just beginning to be proud of a touch of cutting cynicism about his work. He was a man who had been facing some of the deep, wonderful secrets of personality. He remembered the words of the magnate at the Polo Grounds, "Marquard

has found himself at last!" How strangely they fitted in with the words the preacher had uttered to-night, "Never be contented until you find yourselves." And that young Syrian of so many centuries ago knew the secret. His way of life was the way for every man, and in it a man would find his own life coming to strength and power. Here in this big city the Galilæan was like a moral and spiritual powerhouse—he could keep a man loyal to his own life.

The cub reporter was standing still in a secluded spot. A hum, low and insistent, came from other parts of the city to his ear. He looked up at the white silent stars.

"O God," he prayed, "I want that thing—a life stronger than all the push and pull of this big town—His kind of life, and yet my own life, too.

Help me to find myself"—the thought of the great pitcher and his perfect self-command in the testing time flashed through his mind, and he added, "and to keep a grip on myself in the hardest hour."

Below him the river caught up a thousand gleaming lights. The hum of the city made low music in his ears. He stood for a long time. His face was set with decision, and in his eyes there was a deep glow of quiet joy. Before him life was to unfold. But he had found himself.

THE TOWN AND THE GOD OF
THE TOWN

THE TOWN AND THE GOD OF THE TOWN

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN was palpitating with excitement. New York was in the midst of one of its periodic campaigns against the domination of corrupt political forces. A new mayor was to be elected, and altogether, there was an opportunity to put the men who played politics for revenue only out of control. A crowd of many thousands had gathered within the ample walls of the great building. The best elements of the city were making articulate their hatred of municipal misgovernment.

A young lawyer sat in his chair engrossed with his own thoughts and paying little attention to the people all about him. Two years ago Philip Morton had come to the metropolis

after a really brilliant course in the nation's greatest law school. He had been without influential friends to speak for him, and getting a start had been a hard matter. But he had worked on with cool, dogged persistence. Several times he had changed employers. Once he found himself in a fair way of becoming the partner of a shyster lawyer, but the methods of the man who made him such a good financial offer soon sickened him, and he left the office without much ceremony. Once he found himself one of a large group of legal advisers of a corporation doing a big business. The situation seemed to offer much in the way of experience at least. But here again he found himself revolting from the ethical standards of the organization, and once more withdrew. He had begun to wonder if his standards

were quite impossible in the bustling, active, powerful city to which he had come.

Recently he had secured a position with a firm which he knew was held in high regard. To have the smallest place with that group of lawyers had brought a thrill to his heart. Better days seemed at hand. But only yesterday he had been given a case to look into which had aroused his apprehensions. He had gone carefully over all the facts, and had reviewed important decisions which might have a bearing upon the situation. It seemed to him a very clear case. The man who was ready to be a client of the firm had the law technically on his side. But ethically he was evidently, and miserably, wrong. Would the firm take up the case and help this man to secure money to which he had no moral right, through

a cleverly manipulated legal technicality?

He had left the office this afternoon pondering the problem. By a strange coincidence he had come down in the elevator with two sharp-featured, keen-eyed, efficient young lawyers belonging to another firm. One of them was saying: "Of course we must see that our client gets all that the law allows. It isn't our business to settle subtle questions of ethics. We are not conducting a school of moral philosophy. We are conducting a business concern and we've got to make it go."

Did that represent the spirit of this amazing, brilliant, wonderful town? Must a man make moral compromises in order to succeed here? Would his firm take the case which he had been examining? And if it did, what would he do? Would

he put himself out of a job again? Or would he crush his scruples and accept the standards of the firm?

At this point not even a very pre-occupied young man could busy himself longer with his own thoughts. The multitude of people in Madison Square Garden had simply gone wild at the entrance of the man who was the big feature of the meeting. They had listened with more or less patience to other men, but this man of rugged, dominant personality, who knew how to give and take hard blows, whose sentences as he spoke were like a succession of pistol shots, this suit of armor made into a man, this politician with moral ideals and practical efficiency welded into one, was the man they had come to hear.

The young lawyer was seated where he could have a particularly clear view of the speaker, and could

hear every word which fell from his lips, and even every modulation of tone. He looked with increasing interest at the man who stood with such silent power in the very poise of his body while he waited for the applause to cease.

Then his speech began. The iron jaws opened. There was a curious flash of belligerent-looking teeth, and biting, incisive, penetrating sentences fell from his lips. Here was a man who knew life to the center. He knew New York thoroughly. He was no vague and impotent visionary. He was a cool, hard-headed man of affairs. But he was a man of moral standards too. And as his words leaped out like the eruption of a volcano, he made you believe in his standards, his ideals, and you felt that he was the mouthpiece of a town where morals were to be put

into command. The rush of his indignation against the political corruption which had disgraced the city was like the sudden impact of a cavalry charge. The energy of his confidence in the men of New York to rise en masse and crush the evil forces was more than an enthusiasm. It seemed the power of an awakened people expressed in compelling speech.

The young lawyer turned from the speaker to allow his eye to move over the thousands who were listening to him. How completely they responded to every word! How entirely they were at one with the moral passion which flung itself out in the sharp and telling epigrams which came from the speaker's lips! The very soul of New York seemed revealed in these thousands of eager faces. And that soul was not a wor-

shiper of mammon or greed or indulgence. Perhaps the town had a great moral God after all.

At the close of the meeting the young man took a subway train for Brooklyn Bridge. He wanted to think things out. He had a feeling that he must fight things out, that in some strange, definite way this was for him a night of destiny.

A little later he was walking over the bridge with his great, swinging stride. He turned to look back toward Manhattan. His eyes fell on the great shadowy buildings which stood on and about Wall Street. They were clearly silhouetted in the bright moonlight. The words of a certain poet written about this very spot rang in his ears—"that vast Necropolis of souls." Was it just that, and always that, or was it sometimes the place of the birth

pangs of souls, the place of testing where a man might become strong?

He suddenly seemed to see a vision of two cities each called New York. One was a city of relentless greed and remorseless cruelty, a city of indulgence, sometimes refined, sometimes gross, but always morally disintegrating. Its god was self. Its passions were material success and material enjoyment. The other was a city full of self-sacrifice and service, full of the ministry of the strong to the weak, of that comradely helpfulness which brings not only a helper, but a friend, to the man in need. It was a city of belligerent moral passion ready at any risk of personal ease or fortune to fight the battles of good morals and good government. Its God had a conscience, and its God had a heart.

Of which one of these cities would

he be a citizen? With which group of people would he ally himself? Would he become a part of the New York which had only a body, or would he become united with the New York which had a soul?

To-morrow morning he would be asked for his report on the case which he had been investigating. Was he ready to be called a visionary, to lose his position, to endanger his prospects for the sake of the moral voice which spoke so insistently within? Once again he seemed in Madison Square Garden. He was a part of that rising tide of civic passion ready to battle and sacrifice for the sake of a righteous town. The sharp, commanding words of the speaker once more rang in his ears. And again he felt their magnetic moral power.

He closed his fists tightly as his face set in decision. "I'll do it," he

cried, "no matter what it costs! I'm going to belong to the New York which has a soul."

.
The next morning it was a calm and steady young American who entered the office of the senior member of a great law firm to make his report. He was clear of eye and his definite, sharply cut features were good to look upon. He stated the essentials of the case with brevity, but with entire lucidity.

"And what would you advise in this case?" asked the great lawyer, with a mysterious gleam in his eye.

"I don't think we can have anything to do with it, sir," replied Philip Morton, steadily.

There was a moment's silence, and then a light shone suddenly on the strong iron face of the senior member of the firm. There was something

very revealing about his face, but he only said quietly:

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Morton. You may take up the Wisconsin lumber case now. You will find the papers on your desk."

With a deep rich glow in his heart, Philip Morton left the office of the senior member of the firm. The expression he had seen on the face of the great lawyer seemed a priceless possession. It came to him quickly that he had seen the same expression on many faces the night before. In that expression there was a revelation of the God of the town—a God of justice and honor and unflinching integrity. There might be another New York with another deity, Philip Morton reflected, but this city with a soul was the city of his citizenship—a good, great town in which to dwell.

THE WORLD WE MUST MAS-
TER AND THE WORLD
WE MUST SERVE

THE WORLD WE MUST MAS- TER AND THE WORLD WE MUST SERVE

ELIZABETH DALTON made a very charming picture as she sat in her steamer chair. The deck steward had tucked her in comfortably and the fresh breeze blowing against her face had brought an unwonted vividness of color. Locks of hair which had stolen out were dancing with the winds which blew, and the eyes beneath were flashing with the enjoyment of good health and the particular pride of being perfectly fit the second day out. The ship had not passed far beyond New York Harbor when Elizabeth's mother, submitting to the inevitable, had retired to the privacy of her stateroom. She was now in a con-

dition where the presence of the nearest and dearest friends seemed an impertinence, and the only remote approach to comfort lay in absolute quiet. So Elizabeth found herself left to her own devices.

These devices took the immediate and unromantic form of going away to sit and think. Her steamer chair was particularly well placed, and on this superb day, to watch the sunlight flashing on the waves, to let her eyes wander over the far expanse of blue, and to feel the long, easy, steady motion of the ship, was an experience bringing satisfaction of its own. Then Elizabeth wanted to think. So much had happened in the last few months that it seemed as if life had taken the bit in its teeth with the firm intention of running away with her. She wanted time to think things out, to have her mind

catch up with her experiences, as she would have phrased it.

Leaning back with her head against the pillow of her steamer chair, Elizabeth called back some of the pictures which recent days had printed imperishably upon her mind. First, then, was the wonderful commencement week at one of America's most notable colleges for women. It was the end of four years of hard work and zestful, fascinating life, with a splendid company of girls who knew how to set college life to music. Sometimes it was a march, and sometimes it was a waltz, but everything was done to a musical accompaniment. Elizabeth had entered college well prepared and she had used her mind with all the enthusiastic power of which she was capable. In a strong class she had graduated at the head, and this not

by neglecting social life or athletics. She had taken part in every gay and happy festivity and more than one trophy in her room told of her athletic powers. The vacations at home, with the clash of mind with mind, when the steel blade of her father's thought roused and stimulated her, and the subtle quality of her mother's mental sympathy exerted an unfailing charm, were periods of unalloyed pleasure. The crown of all her days seemed at hand when commencement arrived with its thousand and one joys, its honors, and its half-awed, half-thrilled sense of a great world waiting, its doors swung wide open to bid her welcome.

After commencement had come ten days at Silver Bay on Lake George. One of Elizabeth's best friends was a member of the junior class, and when she decided to be one of the delega-

tion which attended the student conference in the Adirondack country, the possibility of having ten more days of intimate college companionship, stolen, as it were, after graduation, was too much for Elizabeth, and she decided to go along. What had been meant to be a pleasure excursion proved much more than that. The contact with the groups of girls from all the great Eastern women's colleges was itself full of interest and stimulus, and before many days had passed she found herself under the spell of the moral purpose and the spiritual glow of the conference. Religion had always been a somewhat formal matter with Elizabeth Dalton. She enjoyed the church's stately ritual. She possessed a quiet æsthetic devotion, sincere enough, but never deepened or made poignant by a sharp sense of

personal need. Her life had always seemed very full and very satisfactory and her soul never cried out for God.

Something nearer to restlessness than she had ever known took possession of Elizabeth as the steady, persistent, pervasive atmosphere of Silver Bay made itself felt. The leaders of the conference were brilliant college women, bubbling over with good spirits and zest in life, but with a deep and noble seriousness, a sense of religion as something alive and dominantly in control which gave Elizabeth a new and odd feeling of being apart. She seemed shut out from the inner contacts of the conference because these others possessed some secret which she did not know. She had never felt shut out from anything before.

She was walking out alone one

evening and thinking it all over. She sat down in a quiet spot overlooking the lake, with its never-failing beauty, and the guardian hills which watched over its slumbers. Two young women approached the spot where she was sitting, one of whom she recognized as a teacher of her own college, who had come to Silver Bay with the delegation. The other was one of the conference leaders whom Elizabeth had particularly admired. It was she who was speaking as the two passed by.

"That Miss Dalton of your group seems to have poise and personal charm as well as beauty," she was saying.

The words of the reply came with low distinctness to Elizabeth's ears.

"Yes, and Miss Dalton is one of the most brilliant students we have had in recent years. She hasn't

come to the vital hour yet. She has tasted a great many experiences, but she has never tasted life. I wonder what will happen when she does? Will she master the world or will she be its slave? Will she turn from its problems with distaste or will she serve it with hearty self-giving?"

The two were moving slowly along the pleasant mountain path and in the still night air another sentence, this time from the conference leader, reached Elizabeth.

"We cannot go far until we learn that we live in a world we must master and a world we must serve."

Elizabeth sat very quietly pondering for a long time after the two had passed by.

The remaining days of the conference were full of vivid impressions. The athletic events were engrossing to Elizabeth, and she made a record

in tennis which caused much comment. The classes came to a real climax of interest, and the evening addresses combined a hearty humanity with an unusual quality of spiritual power.

On the closing Sunday the very atmosphere seemed electric with the energy of deep purpose and devotion. But as the boat moved out from the dock and took its way amid the magic beauties of Lake George, the words which echoed in Elizabeth Dalton's mind were these: "She has tasted a great many experiences, but she has never tasted life." They came with a sort of sting. She wondered if they were true.

Now, sitting on the deck of the swiftly moving Atlantic liner in the steamer chair, she tried to analyze herself and her life to see what it was that she had missed.

There was a sudden movement among those near her. Steamer chairs were vacated as groups of people hurried to the rail to watch a French liner which was passing near. Elizabeth joined the other passengers and looked with interest on the fine ship which was moving toward the land she was leaving. When she put down her glasses, her eye was caught by the gleam of a sorority pin, exactly like one which she wore with much affectionate pride. She hardly waited to examine the owner, a small, lithe woman dressed in black, before she addressed her. A grip of the hand, the exchange of a few words, and Elizabeth had found a new and interesting acquaintance. Mrs. Emma Malden had graduated from the college of which Elizabeth was a new alumna ten years before, and soon the two were walking about

the deck talking of the dear old campus, the faculty, the buildings, and a score of matters of common interest.

"And after your stay in London, you will go back to China?" Elizabeth was saying with some wonder in her voice, after they had been talking for half an hour.

With simple dignity and noble self-control, Mrs. Malden had told her of a husband and a little boy both buried in a New England graveyard. Elizabeth had a quick sense of standing on the edge of a precipice and gazing down into terrible depths. Here she stood, her own life overflowing with joy, and beside her a woman who had graduated from the same college and belonged to the same sorority. As soon as she knew her name, she had remembered the tradition of the gay, able, and achieving student of

ten years ago. Now her life, which had been full of love and all the shining lights of home, was bitterly empty. Elizabeth shuddered. China must have been depressing and terrible enough with a husband and wonderful baby to engross one's attention. But to go back alone! It seemed incredible. She repeated her question, her tone full of bewilderment.

Mrs. Malden looked up, her eyes glowing with quiet light.

"Yes," she replied, "back to China. There we worked together. There we learned to understand the people and to love them. In one way John gave his life for China, and there little John was born. I am eager to go back to the work we were doing together."

"But how can you endure it all?" broke in Elizabeth, impulsively, and

then, seeing a sudden look of pain, which swiftly, as it passed, revealed depths of woe and struggle, she cried: "O Mrs. Malden, will you forgive me? I did not realize that words about your sorrow must be like swords." Her own eyes were full of tears and Mrs. Malden replied quietly:

"I am not sorry you asked just that question. It took me back to the worst, most bitter hours for a moment. But they are gone now." She hesitated a little and then continued: "You see, I had attended many a feast of joy. And I had looked on many sorrows in other lives. But I did not know what it was to sit in the strange, dark banquet hall, where every guest is a grief, and you sit at the head of the table looking at their thin, pallid faces, with no way of escape, for

they are your guests, and it is your hour of companionship with pain."

Elizabeth remembered tales she had heard of the wonderful imagination which in college had clothed every thought with unusual imagery. She bent forward to listen as her new friend went on: "Of course there are many things you can never do and many things you can never understand until your own hour in the somber palace of grief comes, so though my friends in China did love me, they knew that I could not really go with them into some experiences. My life had been superficial in suffering. I had never tasted its bitter fruit." Elizabeth started, but she had only time for the thought of the night at Silver Bay when her friend went on: "I am taking something to China which I did not carry nine years ago. Then I went with the

enthusiasm of a great joy. Now I go with the enthusiasm of a great grief."

There were a few minutes more of conversation and the two separated. Elizabeth found herself repeating the words "the enthusiasm of grief." Was this the thing she had not felt? Was this the fruit she had not tasted? She had seen the misanthropy and cynicism which often come after disappointment and suffering. Had the teacher whose words she had overheard been wondering if she would ever be capable of the courage and the self-conquest which give wings to pain?

During the days which followed Elizabeth saw much of this woman, who seemed to have found some secret of vital energy which played like a fountain in a sun-scorched desert. She felt the full personal

power of her friend as they talked together of many things. It was simply true that every quality of her life was at its best. Sorrow had refined and ennobled and in some strange way energized her. Rare as were her natural endowments, they had come to full flower after the torturing hours of pain. Life was full of interest and charm to this woman. The world roused her agile and alert mind. But as Elizabeth analyzed it she said to herself one day: "She gives you a sense of having mastered the world, because its cruel blows have not hardened her. I wonder if the world can hurt anybody who insists on loving and serving it when it has done its worst?"

The last night on shipboard the two stood together in the moonlight on a quiet part of the deck. The elder woman had come to love the

brilliant and beautiful girl, who seemed all the while to be reaching out, trying to grasp and to understand life's secret. There was a wonderful path of light on the sea. Elizabeth touched the arm of her friend. "Your life is like that," she said softly. "You always stand and walk where the silver light falls. I see it all, but I cannot tell yet how you do it. Can you tell me your way of finding the silver light?"

Mrs. Malden smiled gently. Then, as memories came, her face took on a sterner, sadder, stronger look. In the quiet, with all the interpreting beauty of the night, she would try to put her secret into words.

"At the worst moment," she said, "when it seemed as if the cords of my life must break with pain, it came to me in quite a new way that God knows what it is to suffer and

to endure, that Calvary is God's coming into life and lifting his arms upon life's cross of pain, and that I could go on because God understood and cared. It was not really a new thought, and yet it seemed made for me in my hardest hour. It had been within reach for years, but I had never really grasped it until I needed it most."

Elizabeth knitted her eyebrows. "It sounds wonderful and beautiful," she said, "but I can't just get hold of it."

"No," replied her friend; "a truth like that is apt to seem a little out of reach until we need it personally. Then it comes within our grasp."

There was a long silence. At last Elizabeth spoke, while the moonlight gleamed on her face and in her clear upturned eyes.

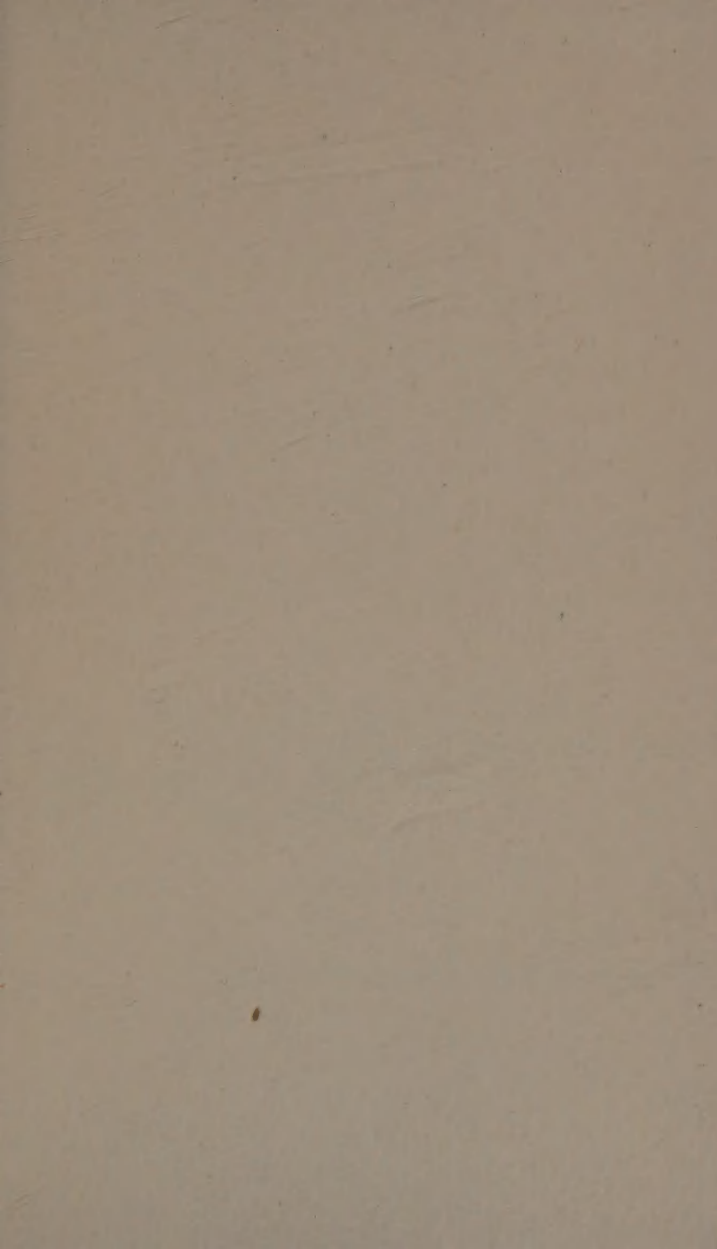
"I see that I must go lesson by

lesson and not try to master the whole book at once. But you have showed me what it means to master the world. And I know now the only spirit in which one can serve it effectively. I know, too, where you find the silver light."

She paused a moment and then said in a low, steady tone: "One of our college lecturers once said, 'Life's interpreters can only be those who have lived.' I know now what he meant, and"—her eyes looked out at the moonlit water—"I'm going to follow the gleam."

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